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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001554

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PNAT](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [ETRD](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: CABINET NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE, MISSING
PM-DESIGNATE'S PROPOSED DEADLINE OF MAY 10.

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Prime Minister-designate Nuri al-Maliki told reporters May 9 that he might take all the time allotted to form his cabinet. He told the Ambassador May 8 that he would bend to the Kurds' insistence that Barham Salah become DPM but considered it an uncooperative beginning to their partnership in governance. Maliki was still reviewing candidates for the interior and defense ministries. SCIRI continued to push Bayan Jabr for the Minister of Interior and the Fadhila party still sought to cling to control over the Ministry of Oil. The agreement among the political parties that the Shia Coalition will use one of its ministerial slots to appoint a Turcoman and the Kurds will use one of theirs to appoint a Christian allows the Kurds to kill two birds with one stone by nominating KDP Christian Kurd Fawzi Hariri to minister. This leaves Assyrian Christian leader Yonadam Kanna angry and out in the cold. The Kurds expressed dismay over the ministries the Shia Coalition plans to dole out, bringing them back into a huddle for serious counter-offer negotiations. Meanwhile there was a second-hand report that the National Dialogue Front (Hewar) leader Saleh Mutlak would settle for the Ministry of Culture despite his earlier demands for the Foreign Ministry. End Summary.

Maliki Announces New Timetable

¶2. (C) Prime Minister-designate Nuri al-Maliki told reporters May 9 that he might take all the time allotted to form his cabinet. He told the Ambassador May 8 that he would bend to the Kurds' insistence that Barham Salah become DPM and Hoshyar Zebari remain Foreign Minister. Maliki remarked however that he considered it an uncooperative beginning to their partnership in governance. Maliki was still reviewing candidates for the interior and defense ministries.

The Sequel - Badr and Bayan

¶3. (C) In a May 9 phone conversation with PolFSN, Badr Organization CoR member Sheikh Dhiya al-Fayyad said the Ministry of Interior will most likely go to the Shia Islamist Coalition, with Bayan Jabr as the Shia Coalition's nominee for the post. (Sadrism negotiator Baha al-Araji confirmed this to us late May 9, adding that the Sadrists will not support Jabr.) Al-Fayyad said the Fadhila Party still coveted the Ministry of Oil (MoO) despite the efforts of the rest of the Shia Coalition in support of Shia independent Hussein Shahrastani whom Fayyad said was an honest politician. According to al-Fayyad, it was even suggested that Fadhila nominate Shahrastani as the party's candidate to

lead the MoO, but Fadhila declined to do so. The Shia Coalition would oppose Thamir al-Ghadban's MoO candidacy, al-Fayyad said, because he was too close to former PM Ayad Allawi.

Christian CoR Member Complains

14. (C) Christian CoR member Yonadam Kanna called Poloff on May 9 to complain vigorously about the presumed process by which Christians and Turcomen were to be represented in the National Unity government. According to an agreement among the political parties, the UIA will use one of its ministerial slots to appoint a Turcoman and the Kurds will use one of theirs to appoint a Christian. Kanna said he had no quarrel with this method but was incensed that the Kurds did not consult him on who should be the Christian ministerial nominee (Note: Kanna is the designated appointee of the Iraqi Minorities Council to the Iraq National Security/Policy Council. End Note) Kanna said he was especially upset that Fawzi Hariri (current chief of staff to FM Zebari) reportedly would be the Kurd "Christian" ministerial nominee for the Ministry of Transportation) since, according to Kanna, Hariri has never been involved in Christian issues.

Christian, Kurd or Both?

15. (C) On May 9 KDP Council of Representatives (CoR) member Fawzi Hariri confirmed that the Kurdish Alliance announced that he would be one of their official ministerial nominees. Hariri also confirmed that the Kurds agreed to

BAGHDAD 00001554 002 OF 002

give one of its ministries to a Christian. Kurdish Christian Hariri said was not comfortable with being the "Christian" nominee and may refuse a ministerial nomination on that basis. Hariri told PolOff that the Kurds are not likely to accept the ministerial distribution doled out by Shia Coalition that gave them women's affairs, civil society, foreign affairs, water resources, industry, environment and housing. Hariri exclaimed that he had no knowledge that a ministry of civil society even existed.

16. (C) A 15-year ex-British Airways executive, Hariri said he aspires to be Minister of Transportation. But with Fadhila capturing the Ministry of Trade in combination with the Sadrists retaining control of Transportation, Hariri warned that the 'wrong' Shia would completely control the Basrah port, creating a corrupt, mafia-like situation for any goods and services entering the country. Hariri said the Kurds would have to meet and decide what they will bargain for to try to end Sadrist control over the Ministry of Transportation. Hariri said if the Kurds are unable to secure the Ministry of Transportation, he would consider the Ministry of Construction and Housing.

MUTLAK MAY SETTLE FOR CULTURE

17. (C) Saad al-Janabi of the Iraqiya List told Poloff on May 9 that Hewan's Salih Mutlaq may join forces with Iraqiya for government ministry negotiations. Al-Janabi said Mutlak would accept the post of Minister of Culture rather than go into opposition despite Mutlak's private and public demands to be named the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Many of our contacts, including Shia Coalition negotiators, presume that Hoshyar Zebari will remain Foreign Minister and that a new Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, technically subordinate to the Minister, will be created for an Arab.
SATTERFIELD